(c) In North-Eastern States, the Government has set up a Regional Science Centre at Guwahati (Assam). Three more Sub-Regional Science Centres, one each in Agartala (Tripura), Dimapur (Nagaland) and Aizwal (Mizoram) have already been set up. In addition, three more Sub-Regional Science Centres, one at Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh), one at Shillong (Meghalaya) and one at Imphal (Manipur) are in the developing stage. Work for setting up a Sub-Regional Science Centre at Gangtok (Sikkim) is also about to start. Therefore, all the States in the North-East have been covered.

Strengthening of bio-technology industry

2332. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite several strengths inherent, our country's bio-technology industry is not able to take a quantum jump mainly due to lack of capital investment and low-spending, R&D etc.;

(b) the steps his Ministry is taking in the area of bio-informatics which is crucial for advancement of bio-technology in the country; and

(c) the investment made in bio-technology during the last three years, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) No. Sir. The biotech industry has been exponentially growing in the last decade with 75% growth in the last three years, as per the information from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Concerted measures have been taken to increase the investment in the bio-technology both from public and private sectors. These include establishment of bio-technology parks, incubators and new institutional structures by the Centre and State Governments and financial institutions etc. The Government for the promotion of biotech industry has taken several measures. As public-private partnership initiatives, the Government of India in the Ministry of Science and Technology has established Technology Development Board (TDB), Pharmaceutical Research and Development Support Fund (PRDSF) and Home Grown Technology (HGT) under the Department of Science and Technology and New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI) Schemes under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), for providing soft loans to the entrepreneurs. However there is a strong felt need in the

industry for larger venture funding as seed funds for start-up companies and angel venture capital funds for high risk-high profit biotech industry having long gestation period.

(b) The Department of Bio-technology established a major Bioinformatics network in the year 1986-87 with five centres of excellence, 11 Distributed Information Centres (DICs) and 5 Sub-DICs under the Biotechnology Information System Network (BTIS net). Over 20,000 Users are regularly interacting with this network for Bioinformatics support.

(c) The investment mainly from the Department of Biotechnology since 2001 for the promotion of biotechnology in the country is given below:

Year	Expenditure (Rs. in Crores)
2001-02	174.94
2002-03	210 70
2003-04	263.79

In addition, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Medical Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Department of Science and Technology and other Ministries are also investing on specific projects and activities and on their autonomous institutions.

Earthquakes in Gujarat

2333. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in Gujarat, district Junagarh Tehsil 'Talala' there are frequent earthquakes in villages near 'Girnar' forest;

(b) whether seismologist or such experts have been sent by Government to locate or find the reasons of those earthquakes; and

(c) whether Government have taken any precautionary measures for the safety of people, property and animals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) The village Haripur in Tehsil Talala, in Junagarh district of Gujarat had experienced tremors during October-December, 2001. A micro earthquake survey was carried out by India Meteorological Department (IMD) to monitor these tremors.